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**SB 26 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program,
and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment
FAVORABLE
Senate Finance Committee
February 2, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chair Griffith, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Mary Lee Olsen, a member of and lead advocate for AARP Maryland. AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans aged 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security and supporting safety net for seniors and low-income households in the state of Maryland is a priority.

AARP MD and its almost 870,000 members support SB 26 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, 3 and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. We thank Senator Augustine for sponsoring this critical piece of legislation.

SB26 is especially needed in improving the energy assistance grant participation for seniors who are income-qualified for SNAP and Office of Home Energy Programs energy assistance (OHEP). Nearly 45% of households eligible for OHEP are seniors.

Today, SNAP and OHEP are two income-eligible benefits that are processed separately by Maryland. Income-eligible seniors usually complete separate OHEP and SNAP applications and often apply at different locations and at different times. This duplicity within our state system has led to many income-eligible seniors not knowing about energy assistance, yet very much needing utility bill assistance.

AARP MD supports streamlining at enrollment safety net programs that help Marylanders safely age in place. We are optimistic with these changes will help more older Marylanders get enrolled in safety net programs at one time, not filling out multiple applications and multiple places.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the Senate Finance Committee for a favorable report. If you have questions or comments, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

